



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHANGE: CHANGES AT A TEACHER EDUCATION COLLEGE IN ISRAEL—DECLARED AND PERCEIVED ASPECTS

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This study examines changes at a large teacher education college in Israel and considers how teacher educators perceive these changes. The research tools include protocols documenting formal meetings of college decision makers, questionnaires distributed among the college teaching faculty, analyzed quantitatively, and in-depth narrative interviews with twenty faculty members, analyzed for qualitative content. Results point to two aspects of change: the declared aspect of the college decision makers and the perceived aspect of the teacher educators who implement decision makers' policy. The findings indicate that the two aspects do not entirely coincide, though they overlap on some parameters, especially those related to the teaching environment and to the well-being of teacher educators.

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This study examines changes and perceptions of those changes at a large teacher education college during an era of change in teacher education in Israel and around the world. Teacher education today is at a crossroads, and different models coexist worldwide that attempt to meet this challenge. In striving for professionalism, academic institutions for teacher education in Israel have each developed their own educational worldviews. Concurrently, in light of outside demands for reform and national priorities, teacher education institutions must make changes in their agendas, both in structure (e.g., merging existing institutions and structural changes within the colleges) and in the content of their curricula.

Over the last decade, the demand for study at teacher education colleges in Israel has gradually declined, due to the erosion of the status of schoolteachers as well as to an overall tendency among young people to seek more practical and profitable jobs. Moreover,

the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) achievement tests in literacy, science and mathematics administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) test have led to a reexamination of teaching quality and teacher qualifications.

The local situation is part of a global trend in teacher education. Recently, teacher education worldwide has come under steady criticism. This criticism has contributed to the delegitimization of teacher education practices and programs and to increasing pressure to change these practices (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Furlong, 2002). It is assumed that teacher education cannot be isolated from the overall social, political, and economic situation; furthermore, the problem of teacher education appears to be a problem of policy (Cochran-Smith, 2005). Nevertheless, due to cultural and policy

trends, there are similarities and differences in the processes of change in different countries (Furlong, 2002). As senior faculty members who have also served on the college executive board, and in our capacity as researchers, we were particularly interested in exploring whether a gap exists between the actual changes implemented by the board members at the college and the faculty members' perceptions of those changes. We wanted to transform our intuitive knowledge of what was going on at the college into more solid and established knowledge based on research evidence. Hence, we had two main reasons for undertaking this study. One was the current international and national situation in teacher education. The other was our personal and professional interest in the local situation at the college.

Theoretical Background

In view of the current situation worldwide and in Israel, we will first review the current situation in teacher education in Israel. We will then survey approaches in teacher education worldwide and in Israel, and describe current tensions in teacher education, for these tensions are fundamental to the implementation of change in teacher education. The theoretical background will end with a review of the latest demands for reform in teacher education in Israel.

In Israel today, teachers are educated at institutions of higher education, either at universities for secondary school teaching or teacher education colleges for teaching in preschool, primary and junior high school, and special education. Currently there are 27 teacher colleges, operating in three sectors: state secular education, state religious education, and Arab education.

The teacher education program is currently based on two models (Adler, Ariav, Dar, & Kfir, 2001). (1) Secondary school teacher education takes place at universities, and for the most part is based upon a "sequential" model involving three years of study toward a BA or BSc degree in one of the disciplines offered by the university, followed by an additional eighteen months of teacher training in the university's school of education. This teacher training is a certificate program that usually involves theoretical education studies as well as practical training and is loosely connected to the Ministry of Education. (2) Education for teaching in preschool, primary school, special education, and junior high school takes place at teacher education colleges. These colleges specialize in teacher training and operate according to an "integrative" model, whereby teacher education and disciplinary studies are combined throughout the students'

education. This program is under the close supervision of the Ministry of Education. At the end of this four-year program, the student receives a BEd degree as well as a teaching certificate.

Israeli colleges of education grant BEd degrees and therefore offer a rigorous three-part curriculum comprising subject-matter courses, pedagogy and education courses, and field experience. The Council for Higher Education has recently proposed a new agenda for teacher education with a diminished curriculum, especially when it comes to education courses. Moreover, the field experience is partnership-oriented and focuses on closer relations between the colleges and the schools. Due to budgetary constraints, the Ministry of Education and the State Council for Higher Education also want to reduce the number of teacher education colleges in the country. Policy changes in teacher education in Israel are not isolated from conceptual and theoretical changes in teacher education worldwide. Therefore, in the following section we describe approaches to teacher education and discuss present tensions in teacher education both worldwide and in Israel.

Global and Local Tensions in Teacher Education

Teacher education today is dominated by two approaches. One approach views teaching as a profession (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). This approach, which advocates creating standards in teaching and in curriculum planning and which takes into consideration the age of the learners, is known as the agenda to professionalize teaching and teacher education. This agenda reflects extensive efforts to institute systematic methods in teacher education, and is based upon the establishment of high standards for teacher training and for granting teaching licenses. This approach is consistent with the position in Israel that teaching is a practical-reflective experience and an ongoing process of on-the-job learning that involves moving back and forth between practical and theoretical considerations over time (Silberstein, 1997; Margolin & Ezer, 2003; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; Moore, 2004).

The second approach to teacher education is the movement to deregulate teacher preparation. This approach calls for breaking down teacher training by dismantling teacher training institutions and breaking up the monopoly that the profession has enjoyed "for too long" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001). This approach is consistent with the professional point of view that sees

the teacher as a charismatic subject (Moore, 2004) and believes that good teaching is not a matter of education and training, but rather is associated with the teacher's personality and inner qualities. In Israel, high-tech and science professionals who have lost their jobs are offered six-month courses to train them as English (ESL), science and math teachers. This new approach is a result of the economic crisis and a response to the need for English, science and mathematics teachers. According to government policy, this training must be given at teacher education colleges.

Recently, teacher education has come under steady criticism worldwide. This criticism has contributed to the delegitimization of teacher education practices as well as to growing pressures to change these practices (Adler et al., 2001). Many believe that the challenges faced by teacher education necessitate new ways of thinking that are more appropriate to new developments in the job market, to increased access to information and computerized learning methods, to the needs and desires of the client (the student) and to competition on the international market for higher education (Adler et al., 2001).

According to Cochran-Smith (2005), teacher education cannot be isolated from the prevailing social, political, and economic situation; hence, teacher education is a policy problem. Accordingly, education researchers are needed to determine positions and define directions, despite a prevailing atmosphere of tension. In addition to the tension between the professionalization and deregulation movements in teacher education, Cochran-Smith identifies other points of tension:

From Theory to Practice, or From Practice to Theory

This tension arises when attempting to determine the program of studies for teacher education, which is usually comprised of separate courses unrelated to one another. Recently, the growing consensus is that professional development achieves the best results when it is long term, based in the schools, cooperative, focused on student learning and related to the curriculum (Margolin & Ezer, 2003; Hiebert, Gallimore, & Stigler, 2002; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). This notion is included in the partnership approach, which is based on the development of "collaborative partnership between institute-based teacher educators and school-based teachers, sharing the responsibility for the preparation of prospective teachers" (Korthagen, 2001, p.11). In this respect, the role of the school has changed, and encompasses new

teaching methods, teachers' self-research, and ongoing professional development for all participants as part of university-school collaboration. Margolin and Zellermayer (2005) describe a model of participation for schools, universities, and colleges to build a shared culture. This is the third culture on top of the school culture and the university or college culture. Adler et al. (2001), who share this view, recommend a clinical model of education, according to which teacher training is built from the practical to the theoretical, with the involvement of people in the field and teachers from the education institution. In Israel today, the general tendency is to train student teachers from practice to theory, based on the partnership model.

Diversification vs. Selectivity: The question is, Who should be accepted to teacher education institutions? Should anyone be accepted, or should there be a selection process (Cochran-Smith, 2005)? Guri-Rosenblitt (2004) stresses that teaching, unlike medicine and law, cannot exert control over supply and demand, for it is a mass profession in which strict acceptance regulations cannot be imposed. Adler et al. (2001) unequivocally propose raising the acceptance threshold at teacher education colleges and thus increasing the selectivity level among candidates. In fact, the Ministry of Education in Israel is currently seeking to raise the requirements for acceptance to teacher education colleges.

Subject Matter vs. Pedagogy: The conflict results in the question: what is at the center of teacher education, pedagogy or subject matter? Guri-Rosenblitt (2004) emphasizes the question of reciprocal relations between theoretical knowledge and practical/clinical knowledge in professional training. Adler et al. (2001) suggest allowing the large and established education colleges to develop a variety of courses in education along the lines of university schools of education, and, if conditions are ripe, to develop disciplinary and interdisciplinary departments as well. In fact, the new Ministry of Education agenda calls on the colleges to implement this approach.

Who Does the Training?—College vs. University: According to Guri-Rosenblitt (2004), some believe that the universities should supply studies in specific fields only to those who want to teach in middle and high school, while all the pedagogical training and practical experience should be provided by education colleges. Those opposed to this approach stress the importance of pedagogical training within a broad academic framework that provides student teachers with the most up-to-date knowledge from leading researchers in the field of edu-

cation and pedagogy as well as from researchers in the various knowledge disciplines. Some people recommend cooperation between universities and colleges, noting the great potential found in this type of cooperation. As described above, teacher training in Israel is clearly divided between the universities, which train high school teachers, and the teacher education colleges, which train preschool, elementary, junior high school, and special education teachers.

Uniformity or Variety in Training: At the core of the above points of tension lies the question of whether teacher training should be uniform and required at all institutions nationwide, or whether variety in teacher training is legitimate. In this regard, Adler et al. (2001) point to pluralism in teacher training as an “accepted” social-cultural value that justifies a variety of training patterns. In their view, teacher education in Israel should be receptive to different training models with respect to both organization and content, thus allowing a variety of institutions of higher learning to provide teacher education. In effect, the Israeli Ministry of Education controls the teacher education agenda and is calling for curricular and structural changes in the teacher education colleges. The Council for Higher Education has accepted these demands and is striving to make them compulsory for teacher training at the universities as well, despite the fundamental difference between the two training systems.

As mentioned, the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Council for Higher Education are involved in teacher education in Israel due to their authority over school curriculum and teaching and their overall knowledge of the needs of teaching in schools. They therefore strive to disseminate their policy as official state policy, which further affects curricula and teaching in the schools. We therefore now describe the recent calls for reform in teacher education, as well as some consequent changes in teacher education locally and worldwide.

Change and Reform in Teacher Education

The field of educational change has matured in and emerged from the turbulent political, social, economic, and cultural situation surrounding it. It has been influenced by historical events, including worldwide shifts to a global and technological economy and the contributions of a number of individual scholars whose work enriched our knowledge about educational change (Lieberman, 1998).

The need to change the educational system has received a great deal of media attention following publi-

cation of comparative international data on achievements in mathematics, science, and reading comprehension, as well as statistics on violence in the schools and the shortage of professionally certified teachers. Reforms proposed in a number of countries focus on teachers and their professional training.

The new approaches to teacher education worldwide, as well as the local political situation, led to the recent publication in Israel of three reports on the topic of teacher education: the report of the commission to examine teacher training, headed by Miriam Ben Peretz (2001), the report of the ELA (Citizens for Promoting Education in Israel) Commission of the Forum for National Responsibility (2003), and the recommendations of the The National Task Force for the Advancement of Education in Israel (2005), known as the Dovrat Report.

The Ben Peretz Commission, appointed by the minister of education, made a series of recommendations dealing with the need for wide-ranging changes in teacher education. This commission, which marked the beginning of examining teacher education in Israel, proposed changes in the existing situation. Most of its recommendations dealt with mapping the programs of studies in existing institutions, making teacher training more efficient, and placing emphasis on enhancing the relationship between teacher education institutions and existing educational systems. Shortly after the Ben Peretz Commission was appointed, the ELA Commission was founded by members of the Forum for National Responsibility, who took it upon themselves to hold discussions and conduct interviews with educators to learn more about the condition of education in Israel, and ultimately to make a series of recommendations for the educational system.

In 2003, the prime minister and the minister of education set up The [Israeli] National Education Plan (The National Task force for the Advancement of Education) in Israel headed by Shlomo Dovrat, a well-known businessman. After hearing testimony from dozens of educators from different education sectors and institutions, the Dovrat Commission made its final recommendations in a report submitted to the government in December 2004. With respect to teacher education, the report recommended changing the focus to stress subject matter, reducing the number of teacher education institutes, and transferring budgetary responsibility from the Ministry of Education to an external body. These demands for reform in teacher education led to changes in teacher education colleges in Israel. The changes were in

response to external demands, such as changes in the structure of the organization, as well as internal, involving changes in teaching methods, curriculum and field-experience model.

These demands for reform incorporate the notion that education reform is intended to achieve desirable results, at least for those who propose the change. Consequently, the process of change begins with planning for the change: deciding to make a change and learning, planning, and organizing for the change. It ends with evaluating the results according to operative criteria determined in advance (Fuchs & Hertz-Lazerovitz, 1992). According to Fuchs (1995), educational change is a process of replacing fixed behavioral patterns in the educational institutions with new and different behavioral patterns. These changes can be classified as first-order or second-order. Initially, change takes place within a given system, though the system itself does not change. This type of change is known as first-order change. After that, change penetrates the psychological attitudes of those within the system, changing the system itself. This is known as second-order change, which is considered a transformation from one state to another (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1992). A system that undergoes all possible internal changes without itself changing, that is, without undergoing a second-order change, is trapped in a "game without end" (Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1992, p. 35).

Usually, the focus of change in educational organizations is located at the point where educational policies and practices intersect with institutional environments in order to shape policy outcomes. In other words, research on change in organizations must examine how organizations adapt to changing conditions within their environments and where organizational design deviates from actual practice (Burch, 2007). Moreover, as stated by Grossman and McDonald (2008, p. 186), "we need to understand how the organization of higher education, in which teacher education generally resides, helps shape how teacher education programs respond to changing conditions and policy shifts."

Yet there are many reasons why educational change is so difficult: the rationale for the change is poorly conceptualized or not clearly demonstrated; the change is too broad and ambitious, so that teachers have to work on too many fronts; there is no long-term commitment to the change to carry people through their anxiety, frustration and despair; key staff who can contribute to the change are not committed; leaders are either too control-

ling or too ineffectual, or they cash in on the early success of the innovation and move on to other things; the change is carried out in isolation and gets undermined by other unchanged structure; conversely, the change may be poorly coordinated and engulfed by a tidal wave of parallel changes, to the point that teachers are unable to focus their efforts (Hargreaves, 1998).

According to Burch (2007), the implementation of educational research over the past three decades has pointed to the importance of local will and capacity in reform implementation. She says that "will is generally assumed to be the implementers' dispositions toward educational policy. Capacity is assumed to be the degree to which implementers possess the skills, knowledge, networks, and financial resources to execute reform ideas" (p. 89). Hence, the political culture of the country under consideration considerably influences how the subjects of education organizations are located and organized (Goodson, 1998). In fact, for some time now, politics has been one of the key preoccupations of many leading change theorists. What matters is how political issues are addressed (Hargreaves, 1998).

Darling-Hammond (1998) elaborates this notion by claiming that just as policy systems cannot change educational organizations solely by mandate, widespread organizational change in education cannot be implemented by the organization's initiative alone, without support and leadership from the policy system. She talks about a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches, in which both local invention and supportive leadership are needed. In fact, according to her, what ultimately happens in educational organizations and classrooms is less related to the intentions of policy makers than to the knowledge, beliefs, resources, leadership, and motivations that operate in local contexts. These produce "the power of the bottom over the top" (pp. 646-647).

Goodson (1998) expands the idea of top-down changes by claiming that the nature of curricula change as sociopolitical processes vary – sometimes the political aspect remains somewhat covert, while at other times it is overt. "When a government legislates a new national curriculum, subject groups have once again to argue their case and undertake new cycles of reform, reconstitution and political persuasion" (p. 241).

As is clear from the above survey, teacher education in Israel today is at a crossroads. On the one hand, every institution of teacher education, in striving for professionalism, has developed its own education worldview

and strives to implement internal changes according to this viewpoint. On the other hand, in light of external demands for reform, teacher education institutions must make changes in their agendas, both in structure and in the content of their curricula.

In this paper, we strive to understand how changes within the teacher education institution relate to the national policy, as well as how teacher educators' perceptions coincide with the institutional context. Therefore, the main research question is: What are the changes in the college, and how do the teacher educators who teach in this college perceive these changes? We assumed there might be a difference between the actual changes implemented by the decision makers at the college and the perceptions of the faculty members. Hence, we posed the following sub-question: Are there any differences between the actual changes at the college and the faculty members' perceptions of these changes, and if so, what are those differences?

Method

This study is an integrated qualitative and quantitative study of one veteran secular college of education located at the center of Israel. The quantitative part included a questionnaire and a statistical analysis, and the qualitative part included two research traditions: phenomenological research, aiming at pointing to the changes at a teacher education college, and narrative research, aiming at exposing teacher educators' perceptions of change in their professional lives.

The college comprises four schools – Education, Music, Advanced Studies, and Continuing Education – and grants BEd and MEd degrees. The Executive Academic Board meets weekly to determine college policy, and the Internal Academic Council meets eight times annually to discuss academic matters and approve new programs. The teaching faculty is made up of subject-matter teachers specializing in the humanities, science, and education, and pedagogical instructors who teach pedagogy and supervise students' field experience.

Participants

The sample of teacher educators who responded to the questionnaire includes 61 teachers, comprising around one-third of the college faculty. Forty-three respondents are subject-matter teachers, and 18 are pedagogical instructors. The mean number of years of service in education is 25.4, with a standard deviation of -8.2 and a range of 8-40 years of teaching. The mean number of

years of experience teaching at the college under study is 15.9 years, with a standard deviation of -7.7 and a range of 8-34 years teaching at the college. Forty-four participants are full-time employees at the college, whereas 17 are employed on a part-time basis.

Twenty teacher educators were interviewed. Thirteen interviewees are subject-matter teachers who teach science, Bible studies, literature, mathematics, art, Jewish studies, language, psychology and philosophy. Seven interviewees are pedagogical instructors who teach academic courses in pedagogy and supervise the student-teachers' field experience for various age groups: early childhood education, elementary education, special education, and junior high school education.

Research Tools and Data Analysis

The research tools used in this study are as follows:

a) The college's internal documents: 1) fully documented and transcribed protocols of meetings of the Executive Academic Board and the Internal Academic Council; and 2) internal published programs and reports. Both types of documents are from the academic years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 (first semester). These written documents were qualitatively analyzed using a categorical process common in qualitative research in general and phenomenological research in particular (Creswell, 1998). First we each independently extracted recurring themes related to changes implemented in the college, to reveal the declared change at the college initiated by the decision makers. We then compared notes and refined the categories until we reached total agreement between the two of us.

b) Questionnaire: We gathered the data by a structured questionnaire, developed especially for the present study. In order to address the research questions, we devised two main questions. Hence, the questionnaire had two parts: (1) changes that have taken place at the college in the following domains: integrative curriculum, use of technology in education, requirement that faculty members hold a PhD, increase in the number of teaching faculty with PhDs, teaching quality, organizational structure, connections with schools, model of students' field experience, requirements that faculty members be engaged in research, number of students in class, and type of courses; (2) changes the teacher educators would like to see implemented, as follows: leave teacher education as it is without any changes, move from a BEd program to a BA program, focus primarily on imparting disciplinary knowledge, shift practical teacher training to

the schools for the entire course of studies, build a new integrative curriculum based on the educational field, limit training provided by academic institutions and enhance monitoring of beginning teachers during their first years of teaching. In the first part of the questionnaire, we asked the respondents to evaluate the degree of change in each domain, on a 3-point ordinal scale ranging from "no change" to "significant change." In the second part, we asked the respondents to report their degree of agreement with the list of statements, on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (strongly agree). Data analyses included descriptive statistics and comparisons between subgroups of teachers. Frequencies of perceived degrees of change were computed for each of the domains presented to the teacher educators in the question about changes. In addition, frequencies were computed for responses to the question regarding the changes respondents would like to implement in teacher education.

c) In-depth narrative interviews provided the teacher educators' personal views of changes in teacher education in general and of their professional lives in particular. The interviewees were asked to tell their own professional "story of change" with respect to required national reforms in education in general and teacher education in particular and with respect to changes that actually occurred in the teacher education institution. The interview model adhered to the narrative interview model of Libliche, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998), according to which the respondents were first asked to chronologically list stages in their professional lives, and then to assign a descriptive characterizing title to each stage. They were then requested to tell their professional stories of change against the backdrop of national demands for change and recent changes at the college. Finally, they were requested to reflect upon their stories and point at the factors affecting the changes in their professional lives. The interviews were analyzed by content analysis, as is common in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998). Researchers analyzed the interviews independently and then compared notes until they reached agreement about the final categories. The categories identified in the interviews were computed into speech units. Each unit was a thematic unit referring to a specific issue or category. Content analysis of the narrative interviews revealed four main categories: a) role perception b) work environment and professional well-being c) personal and professional development, and d) the academic domain.

Results

The changes at the college point to two aspects: a) the declared aspect of college decision makers who are affected by national and worldwide events and requirements as well as by internal, contextual changes (the overt aspect of the institution's decision makers), and b) the perceived aspect of teacher educators, who are self-centered, focused on their own personal and professional agendas, and partly affected by the decision makers' actions (this aspect reflects the way those who work behind the classroom doors perceive the changes at the institution and their position within these changes).

The Declared Aspect

The declared aspect of the decision makers takes place on the macro level of the institution and represents the institution as a complex system. This aspect is influenced by external events in the country, such as reform reports initiated by the state (namely, the Ministry of Education) and by caring citizens, as described in the theoretical background section. It is also affected by new curricular demands initiated by the Commission for Higher Education, budget cuts, merger demands, and downgraded requirements for the teaching profession in Israel that led to a diminishing student population in the teacher education colleges.

These external processes coincide with internal processes within the college. The decrease in the student population at the institutions for teacher education led to budget cuts. Concurrently, as the research skills of the faculty members grew and became a factor in promotion, faculty members started to put more emphasis on international research results as well as on their own. The difference between the internal situation and the international situation has led the college's academic faculty members to feel dissatisfied with the current situation of teacher training at the college. The search for new job markets among young people in Israel, along with the national discourse and demands concerning teacher education, have led the college's Executive Academic Board and the Internal Academic Council to make conceptual and curricular changes.

Conceptual and Curricular Changes

The analysis identified two types of change within the college: a) conceptual changes and b) curricular changes, both in structure and in content. In fact, the following conceptual changes led to the curricular changes,

although they both interlinked and occurred during the same period of time. Conceptual change at the college is reflected in the generation of standards for quality teaching. A special academic faculty team, together with the department heads, developed standards for teaching quality when instituting changes in teaching methods. The detailed standards document relates to proficiency in and mastery of the subject matter, proficiency in and mastery of the teaching-learning process, promotion of academic literacy in class, proficiency in and mastery of assessment, student empowerment, and professional development of the teacher educator.

Changes were also instituted in the teaching-learning setting. These changes were technical as well as substantive. Among the technical changes was a change in the scope of the courses. Courses evolved from small, student-centered courses (mainly workshops) to large courses with 40 to 100 students per class. The substantive changes included more credit given for extra work, such as a project, a research seminar, or self-study. Moreover, technology has begun to play a significant role in academic life at the college. A call was issued to encourage faculty members to develop distance learning courses, and the number of such courses has increased steadily over the years, now constituting 15 percent of the curriculum. Each department now offers several distance learning courses, so that students are more able to organize their own time. Concurrently, the college's Digital Learning Center designed a Web site for each course offered by the college. Most courses use the Web for forum discussion groups, as well as to distribute materials, syllabi etc.

Finally, with the aim of offering a new model for teacher education, the college has established a special committee of six academic faculty members. This committee, known as the Models Committee, recommended a four-year teacher education model: a dual-major BA, combining a specific discipline of study with education or teaching-learning, together with a teaching certificate comprising teaching-learning studies, elective basic studies (such as Jewish studies or fine arts) and practicum. At the same time, the college has consolidated its relations with the schools by expanding its partnership with the training schools. This new model of teacher education has paved the way for implementing the new curriculum and substantial changes in the college's teacher education program. External and internal demands have led to constant and substantial changes in the structure and content of the curriculum. One structural change was in

curriculum scope. The total number of hours of study has been significantly decreased, both by cutting basic studies required by the Ministry of Education, and by diminishing the number of practicum hours, even though the college takes pride in having the most effective and prestigious practicum program in the country. Another structural change had to do with preferred disciplines. The college has decided to close some of the disciplines, especially those in the humanities. History, geography and Judaism have been eliminated from the curriculum, and Bible studies, Hebrew language, and Hebrew literature are in jeopardy because they suffer from an ongoing decrease in student numbers.

During that period of change, competition on the national level and the need to meet the needs of new candidates for teaching led the college to implement a three-day-a-week program and to raise entrance requirements for new students. The college instituted the three-day-a-week program to remain competitive and to accommodate the requirements of the employment market. Changes in curriculum content culminated in launching new programs. One fundamental change was in the first-year program. The college instituted a new program for first-year students comprised of interdepartmental courses; clusters of interrelated courses, especially in language studies, psychology, sociology, special education, and Judaism and Jewish tradition; more course alternatives; increased promotion of self-study and critical thinking; and integration of advanced technology into the curriculum.

Concurrently, extracurricular certificate programs were established. Several teams worked on developing extracurricular programs for additional certification in fields related to education, such as therapeutic studies (e.g., music and art therapy, bibliotherapy, therapy with animals), health education, linguistic editing, and children's literature editing. All these programs appealed to those who had previously earned BA degrees in one of the content areas or to those with BEd degrees and teaching certificates who wanted to go back to school to expand their areas of expertise and acquire extra certificates.

During the period of uncertainty in teacher education, the college developed and implemented a special interdepartmental teacher education program. This experimental program was first launched as a pilot focusing on new trends in teacher education, mainly the partnership idea. As this program was experimental, it was financed by the Division for Experiments and

Innovations of the Ministry of Education. This special program was elective and limited to a group of 30 students who were committed to a four-year program. The program was run as an interdepartmental class comprised of student teachers enrolled in different departments: Elementary Education, Early Childhood Education, and Special Education. The courses were integrated and revolved around study clusters, such as language studies, assessment courses, and curriculum planning courses. The program featured a flexible learning environment in which part of the learning took place in the schools, with the classroom teachers, and according to the needs and preferences both of the schools and of the college, as part of the partnership notion. The curriculum also offered distance learning courses one day a week that were open to student teachers and classroom teachers as well. Finally, the student teachers carried out action research during their years of study, with a focus on the reflective and writing skills needed by a teacher as an academic-reflective practitioner.

During this same period, the college instituted three new M.Ed. programs: Language Education in a Multicultural Society, Teaching-Learning, and Music Education, each offering an updated program for teachers. All the programs have been approved by the Israeli Commission of Higher Education.

A debate over the future model of the college has led to a decision to develop new BA programs, even though the Commission of Higher Education has authorized teacher education colleges to grant BEd certificates only. Some faculty members argued that teacher education in the future would require upgrading the academic program by changing it from a BEd program to a BA program. Since the Commission of Higher Education has not yet authorized the teacher education colleges to offer BA programs, the newly developed BA programs are being kept on hold, to be released when the time is right. Overall, this college of education has undergone many curricular changes over the past six years. The changes were structural in terms of curriculum scope and preferred disciplines, and transformational in terms of curriculum content and focus. The programs themselves also changed. Updated programs were offered, among them an experimental program focusing on partnership with schools and the professional agenda in teacher education, new MEd programs as part of teachers' lifelong learning, and new BA programs designed as a breakthrough idea.

All these changes were implemented during the period under study and are the obvious and overt changes declared by the decision makers at the college.

The Perceived Aspect

The perceived aspect of teacher educators consists of three main points that coincide with those of the decision makers' declared aspect: reduction in scope and changes in curriculum structure, determination of standards for quality teaching, and changes in the teaching-learning setting, especially in the use of technology in education.

To answer the question of how teacher educators perceive the changes in the college, 74 percent pointed to requiring faculty members to hold a PhD, 68 percent indicated the most substantial changes were in the use of technology in education (changes in the teaching-learning settings), and 63 percent mentioned the actual increase in the number of teaching faculty with PhDs. To the question of what changes they would implement themselves, 68 percent indicated they would build a new integrative curriculum based on what is happening in the educational field today.

Qualitative analysis of the interviews revealed 89 speech units (or thematic units) related to four main views of change: changes in the teacher educators' perceptions of their role – 40 percent of the units; changes in the teaching-learning setting and professional welfare – 24 percent of the units; changes in personal and professional development – 21 percent of the units; and changes in the academic domain – 15 percent of the units. Changes in the teaching-learning setting and in the academic domain coincide with the teacher educators' views that emerged from the questionnaires.

The teacher educators' own voices as manifested in their personal and professional narratives shed light on their views of change in the institution where they work and on their self-positioning within these changes. The following sections further elaborate each of the domains of change.

Role Perception

As noted, the major change perceived by teachers at the college relates to their role in teaching and training. The change parameters they point out include a change in their perception of their role as related to the reconceptualization of teacher training, manifested in their references to ties between the college and the field, their perception of their own teaching, and their understanding of their role in training teachers.

Indeed, it appears that many of the teachers, particularly those whose job involves pedagogical or methodological instruction, consider the friendly relations between the college and the educational field to be a significant change. They see this as a change in training per-

ception, stressing, for example, that in the past “there was a large gap between what we taught at the college and wanted them [the students] to implement and what they actually encountered.... Now they see more of a connection between the college and what is happening in the field.”

Teachers who teach the various subject areas also point to a change in their perception of the relation between teaching at the college and the students’ field work. From their perspective, the change is apparent in their teaching at the college. They are more aware of the need to teach while keeping the needs of the educational field in mind. “Lately I have been trying, and I believe succeeding, to connect what I teach with what is going on in the field. That is, I don’t teach only what needs to be taught, but also how it should be taught.”

The teachers also note a change in their teaching approach; for example, in their relation to qualitative education. “I devote a great deal of time to educating educators.” Additionally, they now understand, more than in the past, that training itself is significant. “I have begun to see the specialized area I teach not only as a discipline, but rather as in-depth knowledge of education within the discipline....”

In this regard, teachers deliberate about their position in the training process. “When you say ‘teacher educators,’ I have a feeling of great responsibility. Sometimes I deliberate over many things ... I ask myself – am I in the right place? Do I have the proper tools to decide? Am I making the right choices?”

Many teachers perceive themselves as teachers who place the student in the center, and also as researchers. “I am more curious about what my students say to me – student-centered ... I am much more interested in and empathetic toward their interpretations ... I investigate and examine what they have to say, rather than simply transferring knowledge to them.”

Work Environment and Professional Well-Being

The work environment and professional well-being form the second-most important component for the teachers interviewed in this study. Their professional well-being is related to the environment in which they work with their colleagues, and includes relations within the department, adapting teaching to budget cuts, and introducing and using computer technology in the classroom. In addition, faculty members consider teamwork and the support of colleagues an important dimension of change. They see budget cuts as a sweeping national requirement that harms not only the welfare of individual teachers in

their immediate work setting, but also the subject areas in which they work and the ability to teach these areas as they should be taught. “The constraints of the past several years are squeezing us into a tight corner of the bare minimum ... things are dictated from above to the college and to my subject area, for instance a very explicit curriculum to meet academic requirements so graduates of the college will be able to get their degrees.”

The use of technology in teaching plays a major role in perceptions of change among the college teachers. For example, references to the teaching-learning setting emphasizing technology use in the classroom ranged from a comment that “the computer is significant, and I use it in class extensively,” to “I knew I had to learn how to integrate the computer into my teaching, and I actually hired a technician to teach me how to use it,” to the view that although technology is important, the teacher educator feels “those innovations do not really affect me.”

Personal and Professional Development at the College

Many of the teacher educators see change as the product of a personal and professional process of evolution and maturation during their teaching or as the result of trial and error. In describing the process of personal-professional growth, one respondent even admitted that her “life has changed,” while another compared herself to “a chick that has hatched from its shell,” who is now “wiser and more mature than ever before.”

The teacher educators recognize personal-professional development in the personal-academic domain as well. One respondent stated the following: “I am continuing to do additional research studies, and I lecture at a number of places, and I have many mature ideas as well as new beginnings....”

On the other hand, there are those who see this process of professional development as a process of adapting to current demands; for example, the new curricula required by the education system, the budget cuts imposed on the system, and the requirements that teachers make changes in their teaching plans. They also mention recent national reports demanding changes in teacher training: “I see myself answering more to the powers that be, following the rules without thinking about them, doing what I’m told.”

The Academic Domain

The teacher educators were disturbed by the following academic changes at the college.

Raised academic requirements for the teaching staff

The teacher educators were aware that PhD degrees are becoming required in their field of teaching, and that ongoing research is seen as part of their job definition. They know that “we are being asked to be more academic – to write and to read for the benefit of research.”

Physical move from teaching at the university to teaching at the college

Another change was the need to cope with learners who, according to the teacher educators, differ from those at the universities. One of the respondents noted that at first, moving from working at the university to teaching at the college made things easier for her. Recently, however, she again found herself faced with academic requirements similar to those at the university; for example, the requirement to publish.

Academic level of teaching at the college

Some of the teacher educators perceived academic changes at the college as significant. They referred primarily to the decline in the level of teaching, or the insufficient investment in raising the level of teaching as a result of budget cuts. “I really and truly believe that the quality of teachers is declining,” commented one of the teacher educators. On the other hand, there are those who have taken seriously the demand to raise the academic level of teaching, and they are making every effort to make changes accordingly. “The recent period at the college is marked by an attempt to make things much more academic ... less of a game.”

In general, the teacher educators are not sure they are familiar with the national requirements for change, such as those in the various reports or the demands for reform. Even if they are familiar with these outside demands for change, they feel that these “reforms imposed from above without involving the teachers or what is happening in the field are doomed to fail....” Moreover, they see a gap between themselves and the decision makers, in particular when it comes to budget cuts imposed upon them. “A gap is often created between me and those making the decisions and the budget cuts impede me.”

Overall, the narratives indicate that teacher educators prefer operating within their departments and seek out interdepartmental interactions mainly for their own well-being as employees of the institution. Concurrently, they are influenced by global changes when it comes to their personal academic development, such as research as a vehicle for promotion and technological demands

for change. They are aware of changes within the college, especially in the teaching-learning environment and in the academic requirements from the teaching faculty. Their knowledge of these changes is apparent both in their responses to the questionnaires and in their professional narratives. The professional narratives supply an additional view of change as it relates to their professional growth as teacher educators, a view that did not emerge from the questionnaires.

Discussion

This paper has described the changes at one teacher education college by describing how institutional context is influenced by national policy and how teacher educators' perceptions are related to the institutional context. It has attempted to determine whether the declared changes implemented by the college's decision makers coincided with the teacher educators' perceptions and knowledge of these changes. Our findings revealed two aspects of change: the declared aspect of the institution's decision makers and the perceived aspect of the teacher educators. The declared changes implemented by the decision makers at the college emerged from external demands, such as the Ministry of Education's demands for reform and conceptual changes in teacher education agenda in Israel and worldwide. This paper endorses Grossman & McDonald's (2008) view that teacher education exists at the nexus of multiple institutional and policy contexts, and that the national policy and labor markets shape the organization and practice of teacher education.

The declared aspect points to substantial conceptual and curricular changes. It focuses on professionalization in education and makes a serious effort to conform to required reforms in teacher education (Adler et al., 2001). Although some of the changes reflect the tensions pointed out by Cochran-Smith (2005), new tensions also emerge, among them the tension between the desire to make substantial changes in teacher education and the national demand for budget cuts, and the tension between decision makers at the college and teacher educators who are supposed to implement the decision makers' policy.

Indeed, it seems that the two aspects at this one institution—the declared and the perceived—do not entirely coincide. The teacher educators perceive the changes within the curricular and conceptual domains, but fail to notice needed curricular-structural changes, such as raising entrance requirements. Moreover, they seem to be unaware of the need for substantial conceptual changes, such as a partnership model with schools.

Such changes are probably beyond their realm of interest, as stated by one of the interviewees. Indeed, some of the substantial institutional changes are probably "blind spots" for the average faculty member, who focuses mainly on everyday practice. In fact, teacher educators are aware only of immediate changes concerning their own welfare in teaching.

The perceived aspect of teacher educators at the college appears to be first-order changes (Watzlawick et. al, 1992). These teacher educators fail to recognize profound external changes at the institution that could serve as second-order changes. We agree that changes in teacher educators' perceptions are both cognitive and emotional (Fuchs, 1995), as we have found in this study that their perceptions remain personal; they look inward rather than relating to external changes.

Recently, the number of institutional analyses of public education has increased, and theorists and researchers are able to draw from the accumulated body of organizational theory knowledge (Burch, 2007). The current study adds another perspective to this body of knowledge by demonstrating a certain gap between the view of policymakers within one teacher education college and the actual practice of teacher education as seen by teacher educators, the key players in the organization. This gap is equivalent to the break described by Burch (2007) in her study of educational organizations. Narrowing this gap between the organizational design led by decision makers' policy and the actual practice led by teacher educators—the supposed policy-implementers—might lead to a mutually beneficial agenda in the teacher education institution. Effective approaches to managing change call for combining and balancing factors that seemingly do not go together (Fullan, 2001). An interface between overt changes and the faculty's perceived changes as identified in our study may offer a powerful and compelling framework for effecting changes in education (Fullan, 2000), as there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the single best model (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005).

Moreover, restructuring alone without reconceptualizing (Sachs, 2003) faculty members' knowledge of change cannot lead to genuine change in teacher education. Hence, we strongly recommend narrowing the gap between the declared and perceived aspects within the same institution by means of disseminating policy decisions and establishing communities of learners to create a safer space for teacher educators and to effect major changes within the college. Decision makers should take the silent voices of the faculty members into consideration by enlisting faculty member who have never

assumed leadership positions before. Consequently, more and more faculty members would become actively involved in the organization's management and would learn about the processes for change at the college by doing so. Thus, the declared aspect would gradually draw closer to the perceived aspect of the faculty.

In conclusion, the case study described in this paper can serve as an example for using research evidence to implement new processes within the ecological setting of the college's ongoing academic and organizational life. The college under study has taken the research recommendations seriously and has made some further changes. Hence, an additional study should be carried out at the same teacher education college a few years after the first study. This future study will provide new insights into the changes and change perceptions of the faculty members at the college and help establish strategies for college education institutions to close the gap between the changes perceived by decision makers and those perceived by faculty members.

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